

The Integration of Minorities into Special Operations: How Cultural Diversity Enhances Operations

by

Colonel Mike Copenhaver
United States Army



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Enhances Operations**

by

Colonel Mike Copenhaver
United States Army

Dr. Jerrell Coggburn, North Carolina State University
University of North Carolina
Project Adviser

COL Patricia O'Keefe
U.S. Army War College Faculty Mentor

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

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The National Security of the United States remains one of the highest priorities for our nation. As new threats emerge almost daily and the Department of Defense prepares for significant downsizing, the demand for Special Operations Forces will increase. In order to meet an ever changing and dynamic global threat, Special Operations Forces must be prepared to operate in every corner of the world. To best prepare for future missions, Special Operations Forces must ensure their members are trained and ready to meet these missions. A key aspect is to ensure that the Special Operations Forces are culturally diverse and prepared to integrate and operate anywhere around the world. The integration of minorities into Special Operations Forces can improve interoperability and seamless transitions into the diverse cultural and ethnic locations where future operations will take place. The ability to recruit, train and integrate multi-ethnic personnel into Special Operations Forces provides increased combat capability and enables the United States to meet future National Security Threats to our nation.

The Integration of Minorities into Special Operations Forces: How Cultural Diversity Enhances Operations

OUTLINE

- I. Key Terms
- II. Introduction
- III. Background and History
 - a. Successful Operations where Minorities and Cultural Diversity played a key role
 - b. Statistics of Minority representation across the Army and DoD
 - c. Statistical representation of Minorities across Special Operations
- IV. Analysis/Justification
 - a. How to approach the diversification process
 - b. Does SOF need to diversify (cite examples)
 - i. SEALs
 - ii. Cultural Support Teams
 - iii. Army Special Forces
 - c. Discuss weaknesses of diversification: is there a counter argument
 - d. Current Balance of Minority representation across Special Operations
- V. Conclusion and Recommendation
 - a. Does Special Operations have the right balance of Minority and Cultural capacity
 - b. Will expansion in this area provide greater capability
- VI. Endnotes
- VII. Bibliography

I. KEY TERMS

Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)

Areas of Responsibility (AOR)

Basic Underwater Demolition School (BUDS)

Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB)

Cultural Support Teams (CST)

Department of Defense (DoD)

Future Operating Environment (FOE)

General Purpose Forces (GPF)

Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC)

Major Force Program (General Purpose Forces) (MFP-2)

Major Force Program (Special Operations Forces) (MFP-11)

Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC)

Military Accessions Vital to National Interests (MAVNI)

Military Occupational Skill (MOS)

Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE)

Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC)

Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs)

Professional Military Education (PME)

Sea Air Land – (Naval Special Warfare) (SEAL)

Special Forces (SF)

Special Operations Forces (SOF)

Special Operations Recruiting Battalion (SORB)

Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG)

Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA)

Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs)

Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC)

United States Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)

United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)

United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)

Warrant Officers (WOs)

II. INTRODUCTION

Minority representation and cultural diversity across the Armed Forces of the United States dates back to the American Revolution. Native Americans, African American slaves, immigrants and women made up a diverse group that served George Washington's Continental Army beginning in 1775. Then, it was about capability and concerns over ethnic and gender equality, while still a challenge within the ranks, were not at the forefront. In many ways, numbers were all that mattered. An Army, with the capability and size to defeat the British Armed Forces, was the single most important aspect for Washington's force. The need for numbers has long driven minority recruitment in the U.S. military. Even when minority communities interpreted that service as an opportunity to press for rights or respect, the government's perspective has usually been more simplistic. Over the past few decades however, diversity programs within the military have focused more on equal opportunity than capability. In 2009, a Diversity Commission established by the United States Government, argued that the ranks of the military's leadership required more diversity. The chairman's cover letter to President Obama stated: "The commission believes that the diversity of our service members is the unique strength of our military. Current and future challenges can be better met by broadening our understanding of diversity."¹ This statement, and the findings laid out by the commission, focused primarily on opportunities for minorities. The emphasis here, as it has been for some time, was on minority rights and opportunities, rather than on the more important role that cultural diversity can play in enhancing capability. The commission's two-year study "uncovered" what has long been known: minorities are underrepresented in certain areas across our military. The

commission focused almost solely on a statistical comparison of service by white males and minorities, which included women, as opposed to focusing on diversifying our services as a way to enhance military capability across the force.

Throughout the country, many laws, programs and policies have been established to increase minority representation across the public sector as well as the military. These laws and initiatives, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, have aided the country in moving past discrimination based on race and gender. The continued success of integration and cultural diversity, however, now should rely on new, more relevant initiatives.

Affirmative Action, in the opinion of many, has run its course and is unlikely to survive into the mid to late twenty-first century. In one analyst's view, "ultimately, then, such practices may come to an end. But, of course, the debate will focus, and to a considerable extent has already focused, on the question of how much progress for minorities and women is sufficient."² Considering the point of how much progress is enough, we can anticipate that a continued focus by military leaders and our government will remain on programs to promote equal representation of minorities, which includes females. This will occur until the Supreme Court reduces or eliminates constitutional language of preferential programs. In order for the United States military to progress in the area of diversity across the force, it is important to look at this challenge minority in a different light, rather than solely through the equal opportunity or affirmative action lens. The military must shift focus and view minority representation as a form of capability through cultural diversity.

This paper will address the importance of integrating minorities into one area of our military (Special Operations) and how focusing on operational requirements, vice equal representation, will serve to enhance capability. As a result, many of the aspects related to equality will be addressed as a by-product of this approach and not as the centerpiece of the argument. This research will serve as the prelude to developing an action plan on how Special Operations and the Armed Forces can move forward to recruit cultural capability.

III. BACKGROUND

National Security remains one of the nation's highest priorities. As new threats emerge almost daily, and the Department of Defense (DoD) prepares for significant downsizing, the demand for the capabilities of Special Operations Forces (SOF) will increase. In order to meet an ever changing and dynamic global threat, SOF must be prepared to operate in every corner of the world. To best prepare for future missions, the men and women Special Operations must be trained and ready to meet these missions. A key characteristic of this preparedness is to ensure that the Special Operations Forces are culturally diverse and organized to operate anywhere around the world. The integration of minorities into Special Operations Forces can improve interoperability and seamless transitions into the diverse cultural and ethnic locations where future missions will take U.S. Forces. The ability to recruit, train and integrate personnel from multi-cultural and diverse ethnic backgrounds into Special Operations will provide increased combat capability and enable the United States to meet future national security threats to the nation.

The Armed Forces have relied on cultural diversity from service members for over 200 years. The ability to bring unique skills and capabilities to the fight enhanced operational capability during several conflicts and peace keeping operations over the course of history. In WWI, Choctaw Indians were used to encode messages sent by radio between units and commanders across the battlefield. During WWII, a more sophisticated program recruited Navajo Indians to send and receive coded messages for military operations. The Navajo language, which was unwritten and contained multiple dialects, proved to be so complex and difficult to speak, that many say the successful capture of Iwo Jima would not have been possible had it not been for the Navajo code talkers. The Japanese were experts in deciphering codes during the war; however, the ability of the U.S. military to take advantage of the expertise and language of the Navajo Indians demonstrated how the use of a unique cultural capability significantly enhanced operational capability and gave the U.S. a clear advantage over their adversary.

More recently, during preparation for the U.S. intervention in Haiti in 1994, there was a personnel database query completed across all of the Armed Forces to identify Creole speaking personnel in order to marry up interpreters with key leaders. The invasion turned into a permissive entry and ultimately a Humanitarian Relief Operation; however, the need for language and cultural expertise remained a high priority requirement. The services identified a number of personnel with the language capability to support the operation. This was a prime example of the importance of having unique cultural capability to support an operation; however, the process DoD used was neither ideal nor met the threshold for a future Tactic, Technique and Procedure (TTP) change.

Ideally, this capability would be a part of the Geographic Combatant Commander's force structure and capability package.

A still more recent example in which cultural diversity programs have enhanced operational capability was the Secretary of Defense's approval of the Military Accessions Vital to National Interests (MAVNI) program. The MAVNI program was originally conceived in 2007 as a way to expand the pool of potential recruits for military service. It allows certain non-citizens, who are legally present in the United States without green cards to join the military and apply immediately for U.S. citizenship without first obtaining lawful permanent residence. United States laws 10 USC Sec. 504 and 8 USC Sec. 1440 outlines the categories of non-citizens who may join the U.S. military. Thousands of non-citizens serve in the military today doing a variety of different jobs. The intent of the MAVNI program is to recruit individuals who possess specific foreign language skills and professional medical skills.³ The MAVNI program provides an avenue through which the military can bring non-citizens into the ranks to fulfill critical operational requirements. Special Operations Forces have taken advantage of this program by recruiting personnel with language capability and diverse ethnic backgrounds in order to support missions in various geographic locations worldwide. Admiral Eric T. Olson, commander, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), testified to Congress in November 2008 that USSOCOM had made great progress in increasing our level of regional expertise through the recruitment of native heritage speakers. He stated, "as of today, over 100 legal non-permanent residents (LNPRs) with special language skills and abilities have joined the Army under a pilot program. Some of these candidates will serve in special operations

units."⁴ The challenge associated with MAVNI, however, is the cap on the program. Politics make it unlikely that the cap will be removed, and it can therefore only be used as one element in meeting the overall initiative to diversify SOF. Similar to other studies and programs, the MAVNI program was approved with an arbitrary cap of 100. It is understandable that limitations for bringing non-U.S. citizens into the military needed to be closely managed due to security and other factors, but the military missed an opportunity to focus recruitment on key operational shortfalls and specifically target skills, requirements and accessions to support operational capability rather than numbers.

The question that many still raise about diversity, whether in corporate America, the military, or participating on the high school sports team or band, is what's the right number? That is an extremely difficult question to answer. With each answer, there are multiple facts and statistics that are used to justify what "right" looks like. Certainly, we cannot expect the answer to build business, the U.S. Military or the high school sports teams to reflect equally to the American demographic population writ large. "The U.S. Census Bureau information between 2012 and 2013 reflects that women make up just above fifty-one percent of the population while men are almost at forty-nine percent. The number of White (non-Hispanic) persons in the United States is almost sixty-four percent and within the total minority data, Hispanics make up a little less than ten percent and African Americans make up slightly more than thirteen percent of the U.S. population."⁵ So what does this data tell us? Well, if the goal is that the Armed Forces of the United States are representative of the overall demographics across the country, we are close in some areas but far short in others. The table below from the 2013

Defense Manpower Data Center is a 2013 ethnic snapshot of our Armed Forces. In comparison to the United States Census Bureau data, minority representation for the

Race Profile of Active Duty Force				
Service	% White	% Minorities	% Black	% Other
Army	61.9 %	38.1 %	21.5 %	4.6 %
Navy	66.2 %	33.8 %	19.3 %	14.4 %
Marine Corps	83.7 %	16.3 %	11.1 %	5.2 %
Air Force	78.1 %	21.9 %	15.6 %	6.3 %
Coast Guard	82 %	18 %	6.1 %	11.9 %
Total	74.6 %	25.4 %	17.8 %	7.6 %

Figure 1: Data extracted from the Defense Manpower Data Center and verified on 23 November 2013. The Army percentages in red reflect an adjustment to the Data Center figures as OMB does not consider Hispanics as minorities. This graph depicts Hispanics in the minority figures. Separate data for Hispanics in other services was not available.

Active Duty Force is higher, 38.1 percent compared to 36 percent minority representation in the U.S. Additionally, African Americans represent a larger segment of the military (21.5 percent) than what they represent for the American population (13 percent). Additionally, Hispanics represent less than 10 percent of the U.S. population; however, they make up more than 11 percent of the military Active Force. Females, on the other hand, are underrepresented across the military compared with their representation across the U.S. Females make up less than 15 percent of the military compared to more than half the population of the U.S. So, it is safe to conclude that readers should not interpret relevant information from these, or any other figures or number comparisons solely. The data and statistical information provided above can provide conclusive information when comparing how the military is represented compared to the demographics of this country; however, using data and statistical information alone can only provide a partial answer to whether the military has integrated the right number of minorities and capitalized on cultural diversity.

ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION

"The end of the war in Iraq and the scaling down of the conflict in Afghanistan has opened a new chapter for the Defense Department. We must adapt to a changing world in which global security threats are taking new forms and arising more swiftly and unpredictably than ever before."

*Michael D. Lumpkin
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special
Operations/Low Intensity Conflict (SOLIC)
SOLIC Symposium, February 12, 2014*

Why focus on diversifying what is already the most lethal and capable force in the world? If it's not broke, why fix it? To be sure, the United States Special Operations Forces have racked up success after success over the course of history. Whether talking about the successful operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where Osama Bin Laden was killed as a result of his role in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, or operations in the Philippines where a Special Operations Task Force assisted Philippine forces in nearly eliminating violent extremist groups that could have dragged the U.S. into a war in the Pacific, SOF has been on point for America for decades. Furthermore, the operational tempo for SOF is not likely to change. As Director Lumpkin points out, the Department of Defense, specifically SOF forces, must be prepared to operate in a global environment and prepare for new and unpredictable threats. Senior leaders don't have the exact answer, but intuitively, they know that future success will likely require the continuous evolution of the force, including developing more diverse and agile Special Operators to respond globally. Defense officials and industry partners must adapt their way of thinking and reexamine the roles, missions, and purpose of Special Operations and the entire military. Budget reductions for the military as a whole suggest that Special Operators will likely have an appreciably different and more active role in the future. Although the U.S. has recently been

focusing on the U.S. Central Command area of operations, the mission in the future will be more global. The employment of SOF will not be what we see today.⁶

How do we define the vision for the integration of minorities into SOF while focusing on enhancing capability through cultural diversity? The centerpiece of the plan must be focused on capability. The DoD determines force structure requirements (i.e. capabilities) through a process that begins with the Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG). The services develop their force structure plan to support the SPG with a multitude of capabilities such as personnel, weapons systems, and so on. In the case of the Army, this is executed through a process called Total Army Analysis (TAA). The TAA process determines what size force is necessary to meet the requirements within the SPG, which in turn develops force structure documents known as Military Tables of Organization and Equipment (MTOEs) and Tables of Distribution and Allowance (TDA). These MTOE and TDA's that are developed from the TAA process, determine the number of personnel, rank and skills required to support the Army mission. As Special Operations Forces look to develop more capability through diversity, this process must be the driving force in order to determine future requirements. Each Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) should include, as part of their campaign plan, the force requirements based on their geographic area of responsibility. The TSOCs will rely on their force providers (USSOCOM, USASOC, AFSOC, NSWC, and MARSOC) to provide the right personnel with the right military occupational skills (MOS), cultural and language skills to support the mission set for that geographic region. The set of requirements developed by the TSOCs will be nested within the Geographic Combatant Command which is aligned to support the nation's Strategic Planning Guidance. To

continue to approach diversity through the narrow lens of equality will only cause the Department of Defense to continue the struggle in determining what "right" looks like. It's imperative that top military leaders from each service review the approach to minority representation across the force and how the military can adapt to meet the demands of the future. "This responsibility falls entirely on top leadership, who are positioned to initiate and institutionalize change. Effective vision statements - - those most likely to be implemented and adapted over time - - are comprehensive yet detailed, such that they inspire action from all corners of the organization."⁷ Our senior leaders, from the President on down, recognize that a more diverse military force is necessary and healthy, and will enable it to provide more capability with less.

While the need for better diversification is recognized by many senior leaders, some are resistant to change. Special Operations units currently are made up predominantly of non-Hispanic white males. Figure 2 provides a snapshot of the nearly 20,000 special operators across all four services. While these numbers are an estimation, due to the fact that a portion of Special Operations Forces are classified and no data is available, the information is a fair representation of the small number of minorities within SOF compared to their respective services.

Service	Percentage of Minorities total Service	Percentage of Minorities SOF	Difference +/- between Service and SOF
Army	38.1%	15%	- 23.1%
Navy	33.8%	11%	- 22.8%
Air Force	21.9%	8%	-13.9%

Figure 2: Data extracted from the Defense Manpower Data Center and verified on 23 November 2013. Marine SOF percentages were not available at the time other SOF component data retrieved.

Although this data is suggestive of a problem, alone it is insufficient to demonstrate whether SOF is underrepresented by minorities or lacks the requisite levels of cultural expertise to be effective in current and future operations. Therefore, how do we determine the answer? Three examples support and substantiate the case for cultural diversity among Special Operations Forces.

Consider first the Navy's high profile Special Operations Force, the SEALs. There is nearly a 23 percent difference between minority representation across the Navy as compared to Navy SOF. The SEAL community is well aware of the lack of diversity and has developed new programs in order to recruit minorities. Diversity among the SEAL officer ranks is less than 2 percent; however, spokespersons from the Naval Special Warfare Center and School have stated they are committed to fielding a force that represents the demographics of the nation it supports.⁸ The Naval Special Warfare Center is looking to focus recruiting efforts within minority communities across the country. The challenge in recruitment for Naval Special Operations is for all minorities, and not just a certain demographic, to include African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Pacific Islanders and Arab Americans. "Given shifting demographics, gaps in representation need to be corrected to ensure continued access. There are sustainment, societal, educational, and operational drawbacks to failing to correct this disparity. U.S. Special Operators have long acknowledged they face challenges mixing in with foreign populations because they look so American. The SEALs bluntly acknowledge as much: "Traditional SEAL Team demographics will not support some of the emerging mission elements that will be required," it says."⁹ The SEALs are using a full court press to cover every region of the U.S. in order to bring greater capacity in the

form of minorities to Navy Special Operations. While it is apparent that the Navy has identified a cultural shortfall within this elite community of Special Operators, it is critical



Figure 3: The February/March 2012 cover of Newsweek Magazine shows a group of Basic Underwater Demolition School (BUDS) students. The picture doesn't reflect all 10 members clearly; however, it is evident that all are Caucasian males. This SEAL producing school is just one of Special Operations Training Programs which acknowledges a low representation of minority recruits.

to ensure recruiting is targeted in order to meet required operational needs as opposed to just that getting numbers! This is a mistake that has been repeated across DoD.

The mindset of making our Special Operations Force resemble that of the United States and those we defend will only perpetuate the problem as we move into the future.

Figure 3 above is an anecdotal indicator that minority representation within the SEAL community is low. The challenge that the Navy and Special Operations face is how to approach the problem. If the Navy's approach is to diversify the force is to make it look like the nation it represents, it will only see itself chasing numbers and fail to look at the problem from an operational capability viewpoint.

A second case in point is the enhanced role of women in the military and SOF. Since WWI, the United States has seen a significant increase in the number of women serving in the Armed Forces. Just over 30,000 women served in WWI in various auxiliary corps, less than one percent of the total military force for the war. The number

grew ten times that amount in WWII, however, to nearly 350,000 women serving from 1939 to 1945 both overseas and in the United States. Although, again, their service was almost entirely restricted to all-female auxiliary corps. Despite the increase in total numbers, it again proved to be less than one percent of the total Armed Forces during this period. In the 1970's, women were given the opportunity to command both men and women service members. The United States service academies first admitted women in the mid 70's, with the first graduating classes in 1980. The Gulf War represented the most women ever deployed overseas in support of a combat operation and just in the last few years, the Army and Air Force have seen their first female four-star generals. The last several decades undeniably have displayed an ever increasing role of our women service members. Currently, active duty women make up nearly 15 percent of the U.S. Armed Forces.¹⁰

While a degree of parity existed among the Armed Forces of several countries, the United States has seen the power gap widen in our favor over the past 50 plus years. Our country has experienced military dominance over the last century all while expanding the roles and responsibilities of women in the military. Specifically related to SOF is the integration of our Cultural Support Teams in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that are pictured below in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Special Operations Task Force-East soldiers along with the Cultural Support Team (CST) conduct a presence patrol near the village of Takai. The purpose of the patrol was to gain atmospheric and for the CST to engage with Afghan females May 24.

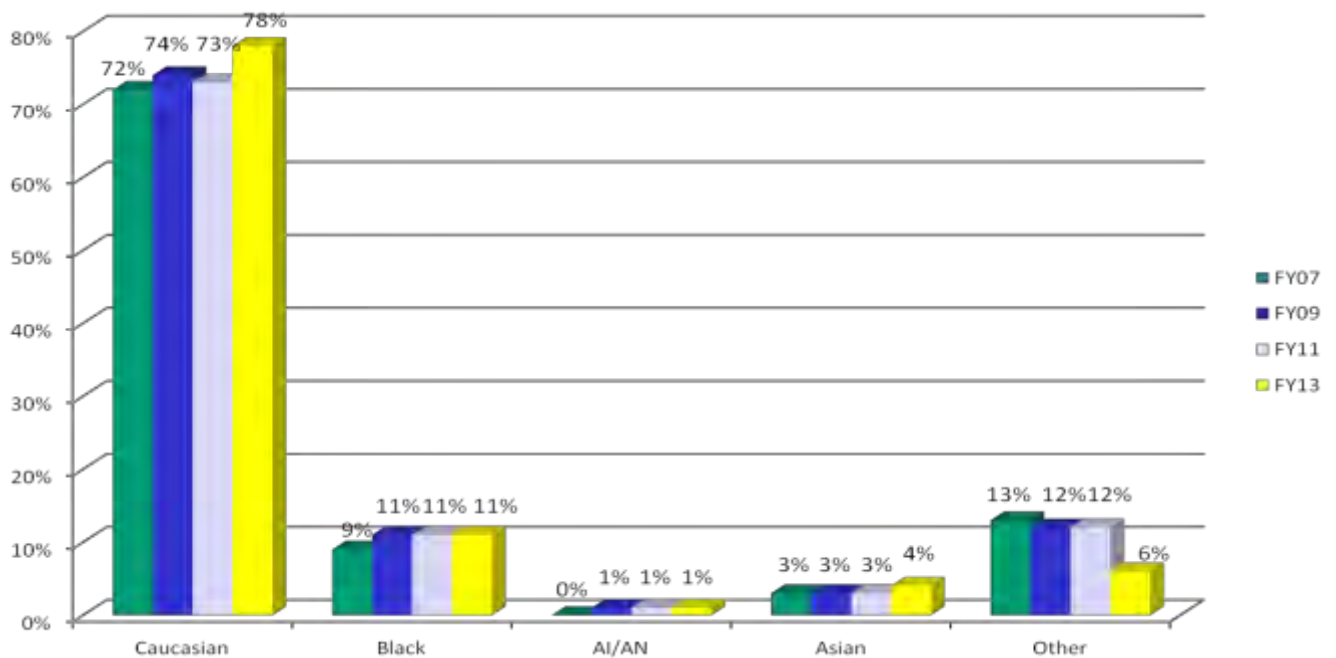
These teams of female soldiers support special operations forces in a multitude of ways. Female service members conduct key leader engagement meetings known as shura's as well as provide medical support to children and female noncombatants. Females also provide support during direct action missions where they support ground combat operations on target and conduct search and seizure of potential female combatants located on the target area. These teams have proven an important force multiplier in the combat environment, so much so, that the U.S. Army Special Operations has developed a recruiting campaign directly targeted at female soldiers.

A third example that reflects the key importance of cross cultural competence is within our Army Special Forces (SF) units. The United States Army Special Forces Command headquartered at Fort Bragg oversees the five active Special Forces Groups (SFG) and the two National Guard SF Groups. These Special Forces Groups are regionally aligned and the personnel that complete the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) and language training are earmarked for assignment to one of these units. The regional alignment plays an integral part shaping the language training that each of these future SF Soldiers receive. The 1st Special Forces Group, which includes

2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, is headquartered at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. First Battalion, of the 1st SF Group is located in Okinawa, Japan. The 1st SF Group's is regionally aligned to the Pacific. Third Special Forces Group, with all four of its Battalions, is headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and is responsible for Sub-Saharan Africa. Headquartered at Fort Campbell, Kentucky the 5th Special Forces Group is aligned with the Middle East and Central Asia. Responsible for Latin America and the Caribbean, the 7th SF Group headquartered at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The final active duty Group, 10th SFG is located at Fort Carson, Colorado and responsible for Europe and Northern Africa. First Battalion, 10th SFG is forward deployed with the headquarters in Germany. The two National Guard Groups (19th, headquartered in Utah and 20th, headquartered in Alabama) have units spread across 15 different states and are regionally aligned to support the five active duty Special Forces Groups. The 19th SFG is oriented towards Southeast Asia (1st SFG), Southwest Asia (5th SFG), as well as Europe (10th SFG). Twentieth SFGs AOR spans across 32 countries, including Latin America south of Mexico, the waters, territories, and nations in the Caribbean sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the southwestern Atlantic Ocean. This region is shared with 7th SFG. This regional alignment supports a recruitment plan that would focus on the diverse cultures to support the Special Forces Group AOR. However, the chart at figure 5 reflects demographic statistics over the past six years and represents only slight increases in some minority groups while the others category, shows a decrease of more than 50 percent. There could be many explanations why the trend is not shifting upward for minority representation across Army Special Operations. Ten years of war and a focus on the operational fight is one; however, this information,

compared with other demographic data across all of USSOCOM's Special Operations Forces paints a fairly clear picture as to the minimal cross cultural capability that exists. The examples cited are certainly not defining when making a determination for the Department of Defense and the nearly 80,000 personnel (military and civilian) who make up United States Special Operations Forces on the critical topic of diversifying the force.

Figure 5: US Army Special Operations Population Demographics from 2007 to 2013. The graph represents the following categories: Caucasian (includes Hispanic) / Black / American Indian-Native American / Asian / Other. Source: US Army Special Operations Command EO Office, Feb 14.



However, these examples serve as the foundation for SOF to conduct further studies on the need for a more culturally diverse force to meet tomorrow's mission.

Diversification will not come without challenges. Some organizations may or may not benefit from increased diversity across the workforce. "Much of the research on diversity management is descriptive, not evaluative, with assumptions about links to job

satisfaction and performance. The literature on diversity management is replete with theoretical assumptions about its relationship with performance."¹¹ Therefore, in order to determine the optimal balance of diversity across an organization, whether military or civilian, is not an exact calculus. Many studies across the U.S. have been completed and for every success, there is at least one example of a failed diversity plan.

Regardless, the success of becoming a more cultural diverse organization will not come without challenges as well as consequences. While this paper has focused on the opportunities within SOF of added cultural capability, challenges can and will arise throughout the transition. Miscommunication and separatism are common among organizations with highly diverse populations. While language along with various cultural backgrounds can improve capability, those same attributes have the propensity to create friction and cause challenges. To make workforce diversity a successful endeavor, military leaders or organizational managers must focus on the management of the diversity as opposed to just trying to become a diverse force or organization. A civilian case study was completed by the International Review of Administrative Sciences entitled "Racial diversity, is it a blessing to an organization? Examining its organizational consequences in municipal police departments."¹² The study's conclusion from research on more than 450 police departments from cities with more than 50,000 residents, is that there was a decrease in crime control performance and an increase in employee turnover as a result of increased diversification.

V. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The United States Special Operations Forces are the most adept in the world and one that can conduct operations across the political-military spectrum, from building

partnership capacity to responding to global crisis, emergencies and conflict. They are also uniquely positioned to employ an array of instruments to influence positively the security situation in nations and regions of interest. Forward presence by our Special Operations Forces serves a number of critical functions, most significantly placing U.S. military forces in the regions and countries where our nation has interests, investments, friends and enemies. In order to operate effectively in these regions, Special Operations must employ a force that can establish special relationships with local militaries, governments and populations. This helps build an understanding of host countries, their cultures, politics, values and problems that will support the management of security issues of that nation and threats that are vital to the U.S. A diverse Special Operations Force that employs operators with the cultural capability to facilitate integration across the globe will enhance our nation's operational capability and support our National Interests. The Chief of Staff of the Army recognizes the importance of developing independent leaders able to operate around the globe by making this his number one leader development focus:

"The leader development strategy focuses on a leader-centric view of being adaptable, flexible, and able to adapt to the situation on the ground," he said, adding that "the future environment is likely to be more complex and asymmetrical with insurgency, conventional warfare and a rapid flow of information within and between the populace. That means Soldiers on the ground will have to call the shots in a decentralized fashion, rather than calling up the chain through higher headquarters. That sort of snap decision making, calls for highly-developed critical thinking skills -- making informed and effective decisions in the midst of chaos, decisions that might one moment be military in nature and diplomatic the next."¹³

Despite achieving a significant measure of success on the current battlefields, United States forces face continuing challenges in adapting to diverse environments.

The nature of the current conflicts require effective engagement, coordination, and collaboration with indigenous individuals. The integration of minorities into Special Operations while developing a more culturally diverse force will unquestionably enhance capability. A mix of cultural competence can play an essential part in the military and particularly Special Operations. It will provide the ability to assemble a successful organization with relevant skill sets in order to comprehend, adapt and influence ongoing and future operations that are vital to the National Security of our nation.

The Integration of Minorities into Special Operations: How Cultural Diversity Enhances Operations

VI. ENDNOTES

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